



Winter 2007

Council Connection

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Above is Jared at Stepping Stones Learning Center in the new Easy Pivot chair

Before the Easy Pivot chair was acquired Jared was at risk of being dismissed from attending the community child care center he loves.

(see page 7)

DD COMMUNITY SERVICES WAITING LIST GROWS

Council Sets Priority

As of October, the number of children and adults with developmental disabilities in Maryland waiting for community services and supports reached 16,820. Over 8,600 of them are in crisis categories on the Developmental Disabilities Administration's Waiting List.

Recognizing that this trend cannot continue, the DD Council has selected the Waiting List issue as one of its public policy priorities. The Council has committed funds and staff time to support education and grassroots advocacy activities in a renewed effort called the End the Wait Now! Campaign. The Campaign is a collaboration of the Council, other member organizations of the DD Coalition, individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and other passionate advocates.

The campaign is a targeted effort to obtain adequate funding to eliminate the long wait for services and supports in the community faced by thousands of people with developmental disabilities and their families in Maryland.

To view the first in a series of innovative videos from waiting list families, go to www.youtube.com and type One Family's Story into the search box.

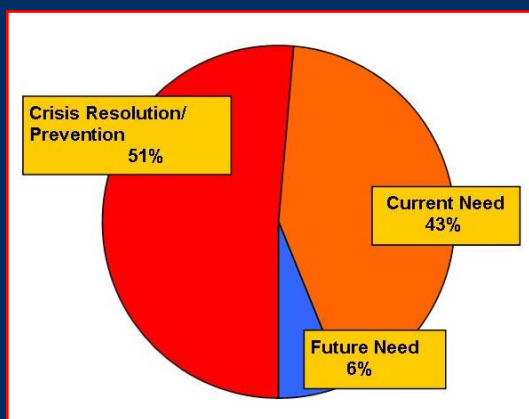
Be Aware. Find Out More. Get Involved.

www.endthewaitnow.com

DDA COMMUNITY SERVICES WAITING LIST

As of October 1, 2007

16,820 individuals requesting services from DDA



51% of those individuals are in crisis

43% of those individuals have a current need

6% of those individuals have a future need

94% of people need services NOW!

IMPORTANT PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT

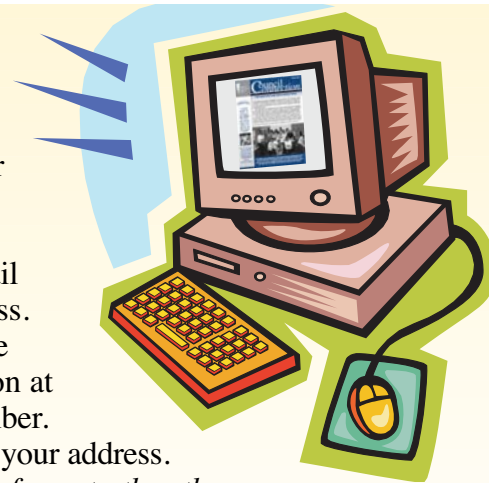
The **Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council** is moving towards distributing this Newsletter in an electronic format only and updating our mailing list.

To continue receiving **Council Connections** electronically or if you would like to be **added** to our electronic mailing list please send an email to info@md-council.org and type in your name and current email address.

If you do not have an email address and would still like to receive the **Council Connection** newsletter through the mail please call Linda Nelson at 410-767-6249, speak slowly and leave your name, address & phone number. We will not share your information and will only call if we need to clarify your address.

*If you would like to receive the **Council Connection** in an accessible format other than the options listed above please contact Linda Nelson at 410-767-6249 or e-mail info@md-council.org and submit a request.*

Please feel free to share this announcement with anyone who may be interested in receiving the **Council Connection** newsletter so they can add themselves to our distribution list.



WELCOME NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Susan Athey-Oxford
Garrett County

Aileen O'Hare
Montgomery County

Jose Sanchez
Baltimore County

Lori Thompson
Wicomico County

Bill DuSold
Anne Arundel County

Lynne Pattison
Frederick County

David Schlegel
Cecil County

Jeri Wasco
Montgomery County

PROJECTS CONTINUING WITH COUNCIL SUPPORT 2008

Legislative Internship

People On the Go of Maryland, The Arc of Maryland

With funding support from the Council, Ken Capone will serve as a legislative intern in the State Senate for a third year. Mr. Capone was selected to continue in the People On the Go Self-Advocacy Legislative Internship Program during the upcoming Maryland legislative session and will intern with Senator Delores Kelley, a champion of civil rights. Support will be provided by The Arc of Maryland. The internship provides an opportunity to learn first-hand about— as well as impact — the legislative process on issues of importance to people with disabilities.

POG is searching for another self-advocate to be mentored by Mr. Capone and a team of professionals in the field of disability rights during the 2008 session. The new intern will take over the Legislative Internship in 2009.

For more information contact Ken Capone at kenny@thecdrc.org



PROJECTS CONTINUING WITH COUNCIL SUPPORT 2008

New Partnership for Leaders in Disability Policy

The Coordinating Center, Abilities Network, Maryland Association of Non Profit Organizations, Leadership Anne Arundel, MD Technology Assistance Program and Ciekott & Elliot

Leaders in Disability Policy (LDP) is administered by the Coordinating Center and is currently in its third and final year of funding from the Council. The project has formed a notable partnership with the firm Ciekot & Elliott, who are actively working on a plan for making LDP a permanent self-sustaining program.

The new partners bring with them a wealth of experience in public policy advocacy. They will use an updated skills-based curriculum developed by LDP and hands-on experiences to provide ongoing trainings and education in policy skill development.

Guided by qualified mentors, the LDP participants are applying their skills by forming action teams around a specific area of interest and will engage in a policy change project during the 2008 legislative session.

For additional information on the LDP project or to explore sponsorship opportunities visit www.bealeader.info

"I am able to advocate for all people with disabilities on a statewide level...

I've also joined my county's Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee...I am glad I was able to be a part of this group."

- LDP graduate -

Project Ride director receives award from the MTA



In its third year of funding from the Council, Project Ride will be expanding once again. Project Ride is a statewide initiative designed to increase public transportation opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, cognitive disabilities and communication impairments. The project is administered by SEEC with additional financial support from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation.

The project will collaborate with public transit representatives in Anne Arundel County on systems change activities such as improving transportation curriculums and protocols. In Montgomery, Prince George's and Howard Counties, individual travel training services will continue for people with disabilities who do not utilize service providers or who direct their own services.

Project Ride will also provide human service agencies and members of the community with small group trainings on available transportation resources and supports specific to their local areas.

For more information about travel training, group trainings or to access transportation services please visit Project Ride's user friendly and comprehensive website at www.freedomintransit.org

Denise Thomas received the second annual Edward 'Ed' Bynum Award from the MTA for her Leadership and Advocacy efforts through her work with Project Ride.



Nichole Harrison, Denise Thomas & Belinda Frye of Project Ride with Angela Epps & Cathy Lyle of the Council

PROJECTS CONTINUING WITH COUNCIL SUPPORT 2008

6th Year for the Cross Disability Rights Coalition

People On the Go of Maryland and ADAPT of Maryland



“It’s all about FREEDOM”

The Council is pleased to announce that the Cross Disability Rights Coalition has been approved for its sixth year of funding.

Remaining true to their mission, the CDRC will continue to focus on deinstitutionalization and health care issues, which directly impact people with developmental disabilities.

CDRC will educate people with disabilities who reside in nursing facilities and institutions about living in the community and long-term care programs. The CDRC will do this by continuing their partnerships with the Maryland Disability Law Center and the Sunshine Folks, former residents of institutional settings.

A new Legislative Rapid Action Team will be established to educate CDRC members on how they can make an impact during the upcoming legislative session. CDRC will also be providing vital feedback to the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Grant awarded to Maryland earlier this year.

For more information about the Cross Disabilities Rights Coalition, including trainings, membership opportunities and compelling stories of freedom, visit their website at www.thecdrc.org

BRAND NEW PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008

New and Approved: Council Supported Health Initiatives

The Council is looking forward to supporting the development and implementation of four new Health Initiatives, as well as the collaboration among stakeholders in ensuring that people with developmental disabilities, families and service providers are informed about the issues that impact the general health and wellness of people with developmental disabilities.

Homes: Maryland Disability Law Center



The Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) is the statewide protection and advocacy system mandated to advance the rights of people with disabilities in Maryland.

MDLC’s “Helping Obtain Medicaid Essential Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities,” (HOMES) project has spent the last three years specifically focusing on children. Funding from the Council will provide training for adults with developmental disabilities to advocate for their rights to health care under Medicaid including how to obtain services that can help them remain in their own homes or with family members. The HOMES project for adults will also educate professionals, providers, and others who work with people with disabilities on these rights and access to specific services under Medicaid. Trainings for attorneys regarding these subjects will also be provided.

For more information on the HOMES for Adults project visit www.mdldbaltimore.org and click on Systems Work or contact Cathy Surace at cathys@mdldbaltimore.org

BRAND NEW PROJECTS & INITIATIVES FOR 2008

New and Approved: Council Supported Health Initiatives

Resource Connections of Prince George's County Impact of Consent



Resource Connections of Prince George's County began its operation in 2003 and provides resource coordination services to individuals eligible for and receiving community services through the Developmental Disabilities Administration.

The intent of Resource Connections "Impact of Consent" initiative is to promote quality healthcare for people with disabilities through education of family members, healthcare providers, and individuals themselves, about issues of decision-making and informed consent.

Year one activities include developing a training program for family members about healthcare decision making and surveying physicians and hospital social workers regarding issues of informed consent.

For additional information on Resource Connections "Impact of Consent" initiative contact Bea Rodgers at Brodgers@rcpgc.org

The Parents' Place of Maryland: Families as Faculty

The Parents' Place of Maryland is a family-centered organization that provides families of children with disabilities the resources, information and supports they need to fully include their children in community life.

With funding from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Council, Parents' Place will continue to administer and expand upon the Families as Faculty project.

Families as Faculty offers a unique training experience for pediatric residents, medical students, and selected masters-level health professionals to learn about caring for a child with a disability directly from family. The trainings take place in the family's home where they can be more relaxed and can honestly discuss their challenges and needs.

The Families as Faculty trainings are personal, individualized and have repeatedly shown to have a long lasting impact on the medical professionals who participate. Many report that the experience has influenced their decisions and attitudes on how to serve families of children with developmental disabilities

Currently, The Parents' Place is developing partnerships with both University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins to incorporate behavioral pediatrics in the project as well. *If you would like more information about the Families as Faculty project contact Josie Thomas at josie@ppmd.org*

Small Grant Health Initiative

The Small Grant Health Initiative is currently seeking to invest in projects and activities that promote access to health care for people with developmental disabilities. As part of this investment, the Council has set aside a limited amount of funds for small grants to support health initiatives. The grants are to fund one-time-only projects or activities of a limited duration, and are awards of \$2,500 or less. The funds may be used for a variety of activities including conferences, speaker honoraria and self-advocacy training. The funds are only available until June 30, 2008.

For more information, or to apply for a small grant health initiative please visit the Council's website at www.md-council.org/funding

PROJECTS SUPPORTED AND STAFFED BY THE COUNCIL

YEA Youth Empowerment Alliance



The YEA, a project of the Council, is in its third and final year of funding and will be ending within the next few months. After the first of the year, YEA's Youth Leadership Program entitled, "Taking Control of Your Life" will be available for download from the Council's website at www.md-council.org

The peer-to-peer training format provides a unique opportunity for youth/young adults with disabilities to learn independence and leadership skills in a relaxed, conducive environment.

The YEA also funded three mini-grants this year to high school and college students to promote understanding and inclusion of youth with disabilities in their schools and communities. The grants impacted about 100 youth and dealt with inclusion in general education and extracurricular sports and training seminars on disability awareness issues.

Contact Ann Marie Lane for more information at **410-937-4957** or AnnMarieL@md-council.org

Family NETWorks

The Council's Family NETWorks project tried something new this year. Realizing the need that many families and care givers have for support and time away from their responsibilities, Family NETWorks offered support grants for "Inclusive Days of Respite." The idea was taken from a successful program in Frederick County run by Daybreak Community Church. Daybreak began its program many years ago with the support of its local Arc. Four times a year they offer a full day of games, food, crafts and lots of fun to over 20 children with disabilities and 60 nondisabled siblings. They run their program free of charge and it is 100% supported by volunteers from within their church body and neighboring churches.

This year the Arc of Baltimore received a Family NETWorks respite grant and has been teaming with St. Matthew's Catholic Church. They have offered three days of respite so far and are planning to continue. The Council hopes to support more partnerships between faith based organizations and local support agencies to offer similar inclusive opportunities for children and adults with disabilities.

To learn more about The Arc of Baltimore's respite grant program contact Joseph Anastasio at janastasio@arcofbaltimore.org

If you are interested in learning more about starting this initiative please contact Stephanie Watkins at director@family-networks.org For additional family resources visit www.family-networks.org

Watch for New Education Initiative

The Council is pleased to announce that funding has been set aside for a new education initiative, set to begin in Spring 2008. The project, currently under development, will focus on partnering with other organizations to bring about critically needed systems change and increase advocacy on behalf of students and families seeking improved LRE opportunities.

To learn more or receive additional information this spring, please contact Kelli Nelson, Co-Director, Public Policy Initiatives at (410) 767-3955 or kellin@md-council.org



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Before the Easy Pivot chair was acquired, Jared was at risk of being dismissed from attending the community child care center he loves. Project Include Me helped to provide an Easy Pivot chair which is being used by two children at the Stepping Stones Learning Center. It is a specialized piece of equipment that is designed to lift children out of a chair and transfer them in the bathroom or to a seat other than their wheelchair. Now that the chair has been installed Jared will be able to remain included with his classmates.

Project Include Me in Wicomico County has gotten off to a strong start.

The Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children, with funding from the Council, has launched a new and exciting program whose main goal is to increase opportunities for children with developmental disabilities and/or delays to be included in child care with children who do not have disabilities.

A kick-off seminar held in May was well attended by 53 child care providers, educators and community partners. The projected goals for the first year of Project Include Me are to provide opportunities for community education, to train professionals and, in some cases acquire equipment in order to maintain fifteen children in child care settings. Now, only six months into the program, the project has sustained twelve children in child care settings by utilizing the resources available from Project Include Me. The children benefiting from the project have various disabilities such as: autism, Asberger's syndrome, visual impairments, cognitive impairments, muscular atrophy and epilepsy.

In the coming months, the program will provide county-wide trainings on including children with disabilities in community child care settings for child care providers, early childhood professionals and will also expand to include family members. Linda Hardman, Director for the Wicomico Partnership commented, "Project Include Me has tapped into a tremendous need in our community. We are dedicated to the inclusion of every child in child care and strive to keep up with the demand for our services." Project Include Me has worked closely with The Kindness of Strangers, a local nonprofit organization, that purchases equipment for children with disabilities. With this collaboration, funds have been matched for equipment purchased, including the Easy Pivot chair, accessible changing tables, ramps and reading materials for children with visual impairments.

The Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children is also the Local Management Board for Wicomico County which lends to the project's ability to leverage other community resources. The steering committee for the Project will focus its efforts on how to sustain the project after Council funding ends in April 2009. Opportunities to share the project's success with statewide stakeholders are welcomed.

For more information contact the coordinator, Beth Cooney at 410-546-5400 x19 or bcooney@wicomocounty.org or contact Michelle Hart at 410-767-3786 or michelleh@md-council.org

The Maryland

Developmental

Disabilities Council

advocates for

public policy and

supportive practices

and opportunities

that promote the

full inclusion of

all people with

developmental

disabilities in

community life.





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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD), in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, recently launched an outreach project to expand enrollment in the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program. The EID program offers the security of continuing health insurance to working adults with disabilities whose income and resources would otherwise disqualify them for public medical insurance through other programs. In addition to targeted outreach to individuals with disabilities, MDOD will partner with other agencies to increase enrollment in EID and use of other work incentives. The project also will provide training to a predetermined group of state and private agencies about EID to encourage them to refer people to the project who might be eligible. *For more information regarding your eligibility for the EID program or to work as an intern on the EID Outreach Project please contact, Michael Dalto at mdalto@mdod.state.md.us 443-514-5922 or Carla Bryant at eid@mdod.state.md.us*



As required by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, the Maryland State Department of Education developed State Performance Plans. The results of those plans are now being made available to the public. *To view the plans visit <http://mdideareport.org>*



High School/High Tech is a specially designed program for high school students with disabilities who want to explore careers in math, science, technology and engineering.

For more information visit www.marylandhsht.org/HSHT/AboutHSH/